



UNESCO

The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization** (**UNESCO**; pronounced /juːˈnɛskoʊ/^{[1]a}) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) with the aim of promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, arts, sciences and culture.^{[2][3]} It has 194 member states and 12 associate members,^[4] as well as partners in the non-governmental, intergovernmental and private sector.^[5] Headquartered in Paris, France, UNESCO has 53 regional field offices^[6] and 199 national commissions.^{[7][8]}

UNESCO was founded in 1945 as the successor to the League of Nations' International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation.^[9] UNESCO's founding mission, which was shaped by the events of World War II, is to advance peace, sustainable development and human rights by facilitating collaboration and dialogue among nations.^[10] It pursues this objective through five major programme areas: education, natural sciences, social/human sciences, culture and communication/information. UNESCO sponsors projects that improve literacy, provide technical training and education, advance science, protect independent media and press freedom, preserve regional and cultural history, and promote cultural diversity.^{[11][12][13]} The organization prominently helps establish and secure World Heritage Sites of cultural and natural importance.^[14]

UNESCO is governed by the General Conference composed of member states and associate members, which meets biannually to set the agency's programs and budget. It also elects members of the executive board, which manages UNESCO's work, and appoints every four years a Director-General, who serves as UNESCO's chief administrator.

History

Origins

UNESCO and its mandate for international cooperation can be traced back to a League of Nations resolution on 21 September 1921, to elect a Commission to study the feasibility of having nations freely share cultural, educational and scientific achievements.^{[15][16]} This new body, the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC), was created in 1922^[17] and counted such figures as Henri Bergson, Albert Einstein, Marie Curie, Robert A. Millikan, and Gonzague de Reynold among its members (being thus a small commission of the League of Nations essentially centred on Western Europe^[18]). The International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC) was then created in Paris in September 1924, to act as the executing agency for the ICIC.^[19] However, the onset of World War II largely interrupted the work of these predecessor organizations.^[20] As for private initiatives, the International Bureau of Education (IBE) began to work as a non-governmental organization in the service of international educational development since December 1925^[21] and joined UNESCO in 1969, after having established a joint commission in 1952.^[22]

Creation

After the signing of the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations, the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) began meetings in London which continued from 16 November 1942 to 5 December 1945. On 30 October 1943, the necessity for an international organization was expressed in the Moscow Declaration, agreed upon by China, the United Kingdom, the United States and the USSR. This was followed by the Dumbarton Oaks Conference proposals of 9 October 1944. Upon the proposal of CAME and in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO), held in San Francisco from April to June 1945, a United Nations Conference for the establishment of an educational and cultural organization (ECO/CONF) was convened in London from 1 to 16 November 1945 with 44 governments represented. The idea of UNESCO was largely developed by Rab Butler, the Minister of Education for the United Kingdom, who had a great deal of influence in its development.^[23] At the ECO/CONF, the Constitution of UNESCO was introduced and signed by 37 countries, and a Preparatory Commission was established.^[24] The Preparatory Commission operated between 16 November 1945, and 4 November 1946 — the date when UNESCO's Constitution came into force with the deposit of the twentieth ratification by a member state.^[25]

The first General Conference took place from 19 November to 10 December 1946, and elected Julian Huxley to Director-General.^[26] United States Army colonel, university president and civil rights advocate Blake R. Van Leer joined as a member as well.^[27] The Constitution was amended in November 1954 when the General Conference resolved that members of the executive board would be representatives of the governments of the States of which they are nationals and would not, as before, act in their personal capacity.^[28] This change in governance distinguished UNESCO from its predecessor, the ICIC, in how member states would work together in the organization's fields of competence. As member states worked together over time to realize UNESCO's mandate, political and historical factors have shaped the organization's operations in particular during the Cold War, the decolonization process, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union.^{[29][30]}

Development

Among the major achievements of the organization is its work against racism, for example through influential statements on race starting with a declaration of anthropologists (among them was Claude Lévi-Strauss) and other scientists in 1950 and concluding with the 1978 Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice.^[31]

In 1955, the Republic of South Africa withdrew from UNESCO saying that some of the organization's publications amounted to "interference" in the country's "racial problems".^[32] It rejoined the organization in 1994 under the leadership of Nelson Mandela.^{[33][34]}

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



Flag of UNESCO

Abbreviation	UNESCO
Formation	16 November 1945
Type	United Nations specialized agency
Legal status	Active
Headquarters	Paris, France
Director-General	Audrey Azoulay
Deputy Director-General	Xing Qu
Parent organization	United Nations Economic and Social Council
Website	en.unesco.org (https://en.unesco.org)
	Politics portal

One of the early work of UNESCO in the education field was a pilot project on fundamental education in the Marbial Valley, Haiti, which was launched in 1947. Following this project one of expert missions to other countries, included a 1949 mission to Afghanistan.^[35] UNESCO recommended in 1948 that Member countries should make free primary education compulsory and universal.^[35] The World Conference on Education for All, in Jomtien, Thailand, started a global movement in 1990 to provide basic education for all children, youths and adults.^[35] In 2000, World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, led member governments to commit for achieving basic education for all in 2015.^[35]

The World Declaration on Higher Education was adopted by UNESCO's World Conference on Higher Education on 9 October 1998,^[36] with the aim of setting global standards on the ideals and accessibility of higher education.

UNESCO's early activities in culture included the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, launched in 1960.^[37] The purpose of the campaign was to move the Great Temple of Abu Simbel to keep it from being swamped by the Nile after the construction of the Aswan Dam. During the 20-year campaign, 22 monuments and architectural complexes were relocated. This was the first and largest in a series of campaigns including Mohenjo-daro (Pakistan), Fes (Morocco), Kathmandu (Nepal), Borobudur (Indonesia) and the Acropolis of Athens (Greece).^[38] The organization's work on heritage led to the adoption, in 1972, of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.^[39] In 1976, the World Heritage Committee was established and the first sites were included on the World Heritage List in 1978.^[40] Since then important legal instruments on cultural heritage and diversity have been adopted by UNESCO member states in 2003 (Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage)^[41] and 2005 (Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions).^[42]

An intergovernmental meeting of UNESCO in Paris in December 1951 led to the creation of the European Council for Nuclear Research, which was responsible for establishing the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN)^[43] later on, in 1954.^[44]

Arid Zone programming, 1948–1966, is another example of an early major UNESCO project in the field of natural sciences.^[45]

In 1968, UNESCO organized the first intergovernmental conference aimed at reconciling the environment and development, a problem that continues to be addressed in the field of sustainable development. The main outcome of the 1968 conference was the creation of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme.^[46]

UNESCO has been credited with the diffusion of national science bureaucracies.^[47]

In the field of communication, the "free flow of ideas by word and image" has been in UNESCO's constitution since it was established, following the experience of the Second World War when control of information was a factor in indoctrinating populations for aggression.^[48] In the years immediately following World War II, efforts were concentrated on reconstruction and on the identification of needs for means of mass communication around the world. UNESCO started organizing training and education for journalists in the 1950s.^[48] In response to calls for a "New World Information and Communication Order" in the late 1970s, UNESCO established the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems,^[49] which produced the 1980 MacBride report (named after the chair of the commission, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Seán MacBride).^[49] The same year, UNESCO created the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), a multilateral forum designed to promote media development in developing countries.^[50] In 1993, UNESCO's General Conference endorsed the Windhoek Declaration on media independence and pluralism, which led the UN General Assembly to declare the date of its adoption, 3 May, as World Press Freedom Day.^[51] Since 1997, UNESCO has awarded the UNESCO / Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize every 3 May.^[52]

21st century

UNESCO admitted Palestine as a member in 2011.^{[53][54]}

Laws passed in the United States after Palestine applied for UNESCO and WHO membership in April 1989^{[55][56]} mean that the US cannot contribute financially to any UN organization that accepts Palestine as a full member.^{[57][58]} As a result, the US withdrew its funding, which had accounted for about 22% of UNESCO's budget.^[59] Israel also reacted to Palestine's admittance to UNESCO by freezing Israeli payments to UNESCO and imposing sanctions on the Palestinian Authority,^[60] stating that Palestine's admittance would be detrimental "to potential peace talks".^[61] Two years after they stopped paying their dues to UNESCO, the US and Israel lost UNESCO voting rights in 2013 without losing the right to be elected; thus, the US was elected as a member of the executive board for the period 2016–19.^[62] In 2019, Israel left UNESCO after 69 years of membership, with Israel's ambassador to the UN Danny Danon writing: "UNESCO is the body that continually rewrites history, including by erasing the Jewish connection to Jerusalem... it is corrupted and manipulated by Israel's enemies... we are not going to be a member of an organisation that deliberately acts against us".^[63]

2023 saw Russia excluded from the executive committee for the first time, after failing to get sufficient votes.^[64] The United States stated it's intent to rejoin UNESCO in 2023, 5 years after leaving, and to pay it's \$600 million in back dues.^[65] The US was readmitted by the UNESCO General Conference that July.^[66]

Activities

UNESCO implements its activities through the five programme areas: education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information.^[67]

- UNESCO supports research in comparative education, provides expertise and fosters partnerships to strengthen national educational leadership and the capacity of countries to offer quality education for all. This includes the
 - UNESCO Chairs, an international network of 644 UNESCO Chairs, involving over 770 institutions in 126 countries
 - Environmental Conservation Organization
 - Convention against Discrimination in Education adopted in 1960
 - Organization of the International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) in an interval of 12 years
 - Publication of the Education for All Global Monitoring Report



UNESCO offices in Brasília

- Publication of the *Four Pillars of Learning* seminal document
- UNESCO ASPNet, an international network of more than 12,000 schools in 182 countries

UNESCO does not accredit institutions of higher learning.^[68]

- UNESCO also issues public statements to educate the public:
 - Seville Statement on Violence: A statement adopted by UNESCO in 1989 to refute the notion that humans are biologically predisposed to organized violence.
- Designating projects and places of cultural and scientific significance, such as:
 - Global Geoparks Network
 - Biosphere reserves, through the Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB), since 1971
 - City of Literature; in 2007, the first city to be given this title was Edinburgh, the site of Scotland's first circulating library.^[69] In 2008, Iowa City, Iowa, became the City of Literature.^{[70][71]}
 - Endangered languages and linguistic diversity projects (*UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*)
 - Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity
 - Memory of the World International Register, since 1997
 - Water resources management, through the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), since 1965
 - World Heritage Sites
 - World Digital Library
- Encouraging the "free flow of ideas by images and words" by:
 - Promoting freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and freedom of information legislation, through the Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development,^[72] including the International Programme for the Development of Communication^[73]
 - Promoting the safety of journalists and combatting impunity for those who attack them,^[74] through coordination of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity^[75]
 - Promoting universal access to and preservation of information and open solutions for sustainable development through the Knowledge Societies Division,^[76] including the Memory of the World Programme^[77] and Information for All Programme^[78]
 - Promoting pluralism, gender equality and cultural diversity in the media
 - Promoting Internet Universality and its principles, that the Internet should be (i) human Rights-based, (ii) Open, (iii) Accessible to all, and (iv) nurtured by Multi-stakeholder participation (summarized as the acronym R.O.A.M.)^[79]
 - Generating knowledge through publications such as *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development*,^[80] the UNESCO Series on Internet Freedom,^[81] and the Media Development Indicators,^[82] as well as other indicator-based studies.
- Promoting events, such as:
 - International Decade for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World: 2001–2010, proclaimed by the UN in 1998
 - World Press Freedom Day, 3 May each year, to promote freedom of expression and freedom of the press as a basic human right and as crucial components of any healthy, democratic and free society.
 - *Criança Esperança* in Brazil, in partnership with Rede Globo, to raise funds for community-based projects that foster social integration and violence prevention.
 - International Literacy Day, 8 September each year
 - International Year for the Culture of Peace, 2000
 - Health Education for Behavior Change programme in partnership with the Ministry of Education of Kenya which was financially supported by the Government of Azerbaijan to promote health education among 10-19-year-old young people who live in informal camp in Kibera, Nairobi. The project was carried out between September 2014 – December 2016.^[83]
 - World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development 21 May each year
- Founding and funding projects, such as:
 - Migration Museums Initiative: Promoting the establishment of museums for cultural dialogue with migrant populations.^[84]
 - UNESCO-CEPES, the European Centre for Higher Education: established in 1972 in Bucharest, Romania, as a decentralized office to promote international co-operation in higher education in Europe as well as Canada, USA and Israel. *Higher Education in Europe* is its official journal.
 - Free Software Directory: since 1998 UNESCO and the Free Software Foundation have jointly funded this project cataloguing free software.
 - FRESH, Focusing Resources on Effective School Health^[85]
 - OANA, Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies
 - International Council of Science
 - UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors
 - ASOMPS, Asian Symposium on Medicinal Plants and Spices, a series of scientific conferences held in Asia
 - Botany 2000, a programme supporting taxonomy, and biological and cultural diversity of medicinal and ornamental plants, and their protection against environmental pollution
 - The UNESCO Collection of Representative Works, translating works of world literature both to and from multiple languages, from 1948 to 2005
 - GoUNESCO, an umbrella of initiatives to make heritage fun supported by UNESCO, New Delhi Office^[86]
 - UNESCO-CHIC BIRUP, UNESCO-CHIC Group (China) Biosphere Rural and Urbanization Programme^[87]

The UNESCO transparency portal^[88] has been designed to enable public access to information regarding the Organization's activities, such as its aggregate budget for a biennium, as well as links to relevant programmatic and financial documents. These two distinct sets of information are published on the IATI registry, respectively based on the IATI Activity Standard and the IATI Organization Standard.

There have been proposals to establish two new UNESCO lists. The first proposed list will focus on movable cultural heritage such as artifacts, paintings, and biofacts. The list may include cultural objects, such as the Jōmon Venus of Japan, the Mona Lisa of France, the Gebel el-Arak Knife of Egypt, The Ninth Wave of Russia, the Seated Woman of Çatalhöyük of Turkey, the David (Michelangelo) of Italy, the Mathura Herakles of India, the Manunggul Jar of the Philippines, the Crown of Baekje of South Korea, The Hay Wain of the United Kingdom and the Benin Bronzes of Nigeria. The second proposed list will focus on the world's living species, such as the komodo dragon of Indonesia, the panda of China, the bald eagle of North American countries, the aye-aye of Madagascar, the Asiatic lion of India, the kākāpō of New Zealand, and the mountain tapir of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.^{[89][90]}

Media

UNESCO and its specialized institutions issue a number of magazines.

Created in 1945, *The UNESCO Courier* magazine states its mission to "promote UNESCO's ideals, maintain a platform for the dialogue between cultures and provide a forum for international debate". Since March 2006 it has been available free online, with limited printed issues. Its articles express the opinions of the authors which are not necessarily the opinions of UNESCO. There was a hiatus in publishing between 2012 and 2017.^[91]

In 1950, UNESCO initiated the quarterly review *Impact of Science on Society* (also known as *Impact*) to discuss the influence of science on society. The journal ceased publication in 1992.^[92] UNESCO also published Museum International Quarterly from the year 1948.

Official UNESCO NGOs

UNESCO has official relations with 322 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs).^[93] Most of these are what UNESCO calls "operational"; a select few are "formal".^[94] The highest form of affiliation to UNESCO is "formal associate", and the 22 NGOs^[95] with *formal associate* (ASC) relations occupying offices at UNESCO are:

Abbr	Organization
IB	<u>International Baccalaureate</u>
CCIVS	Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service
CIPSH	<u>International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies</u> (<i>Conseil International de Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines</i> ; publishes <u>Diogenes</u>)
CIOFF	<u>International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts</u> (<i>Conseil International des Organisations de Festivals de Folklore et d'Arts Traditionnels</i>)
EI	<u>Education International</u>
IAU	<u>International Association of Universities</u>
IFTC	<u>International Council for Film, Television and Audiovisual Communication</u>
ICOM	<u>International Council of Museums</u>
ICSSPE	<u>International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education</u>
ICA	<u>International Council on Archives</u>
ICOMOS	<u>International Council on Monuments and Sites</u>
IFJ	<u>International Federation of Journalists</u>
IFLA	<u>International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions</u>
IFPA	<u>International Federation of Poetry Associations</u>
IMC	<u>International Music Council</u>
IPA	<u>International Police Association</u>
INSULA	<u>International Scientific Council for Island Development</u>
ISC	<u>International Science Council</u> (formerly <u>ICSU</u> and <u>ISSC</u>)
ITI	<u>International Theatre Institute</u>
IUCN	<u>International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources</u>
IUTAO	<u>International Union of Technical Associations and Organizations</u>
UIA	<u>Union of International Associations</u>
WAN	<u>World Association of Newspapers</u>
WFEO	<u>World Federation of Engineering Organizations</u>
WFUCA	<u>World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations</u>

Institutes and centres

The institutes are specialized departments of the organization that support UNESCO's programme, providing specialized support for cluster and national offices.



UNESCO Institute for Water Education in Delft

Abbr	Name	Location
IBE	International Bureau of Education	Geneva ^[96]
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning	Hamburg ^[97]
IIEP	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning	Paris (headquarters) and Buenos Aires and Dakar (regional offices) ^[98]
IITE	UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education	Moscow ^[99]
IICBA	UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa	Addis Ababa ^[100]
IESALC	UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean	Caracas ^[101]
MGIEP	Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development	New Delhi ^[102]
UNESCO-UNEVOC	UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training	Bonn ^[103]
ICWRGC	International Centre for Water Resources and Global Change	Koblenz ^[104]
IHE	IHE-Delft Institute for Water Education	Delft ^[105]
ICTP	International Centre for Theoretical Physics	Trieste ^[106]
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics	Montreal ^[107]

Prizes

UNESCO awards 26 prizes^[108] in education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, communication and information as well as peace:

Education

- [UNESCO/King Sejong Literacy Prize](#)
- [UNESCO/Confucius Prize for Literacy](#)
- [UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development](#)
- [UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education](#)
- [UNESCO/Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Prize for Outstanding Practice and Performance in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Teachers](#)
- [UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education](#)

Natural Sciences

- [L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards for Women in Science](#)
- [UNESCO/Kalinga Prize for the Popularization of Science](#)
- [UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences](#)
- [Carlos J. Finlay Prize for Microbiology](#)
- [UNESCO/Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation](#)
- [UNESCO-Russia Mendeleev International Prize in the Basic Sciences](#)
- [UNESCO-AI Fozan International Prize for the Promotion of Young Scientists in STEM](#)
- [Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management](#)

Social and Human Sciences

- [UNESCO Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science](#)
- [UNESCO/Juan Bosch Prize for the Promotion of Social Science Research in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)
- [UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence](#)
- [UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture](#)
- [UNESCO/International José Martí Prize](#)
- [UNESCO-UNAM / Jaime Torres Bodet Prize in social sciences, humanities and arts](#)

Culture

- [Melina Mercouri International Prize for the Safeguarding and Management of Cultural Landscapes \(UNESCO-Greece\)](#)

Communication and Information

- [UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize](#)
- [UNESCO/Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize to promote Quality Education for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities](#)

- UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize

Peace

- Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize

Inactive prizes

- International Simón Bolívar Prize (inactive since 2004)
- UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education
- UNESCO/Obiang Nguema Mbasogo International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences (inactive since 2010)
- UNESCO Prize for the Promotion of the Arts

International Days observed at UNESCO

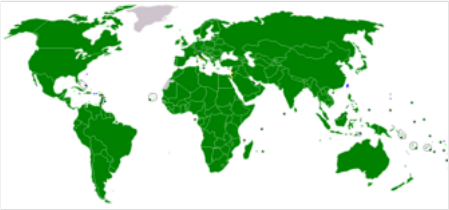
International Days observed at UNESCO are provided in the table below:^[109]

Date	Name
14 January	World Logic Day
24 January	World Day for African and Afrodescendant Culture^[110]
24 January	International Day of Education
27 January	International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust
11 February	International Day of Women and Girls in Science
13 February	World Radio Day
21 February	International Mother Language Day
4 March	UNESCO World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development
8 March	International Women's Day
14 March	International Day of Mathematics
20 March	International Francophonie Day
21 March	International Day of Nowruz
21 March	World Poetry Day
21 March	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
22 March	World Water Day
5 April	International Day of Conscience
6 April	International Day of Sport for Development and Peace
15 April	World Art Day
23 April	World Book and Copyright Day
30 April	International Jazz Day
3 May	World Press Freedom Day
5 May	African World Heritage Day
5 May	World Portuguese Language Day
16 May	International Day of Light
21 May	World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
22 May	International Day for Biological Diversity
5 June	World Environment Day
8 June	World Oceans Day
17 June	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
7 July	Kiswahili Language Day
18 July	Nelson Mandela International Day
26 July	International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem
9 August	International Day of the World's Indigenous People
12 August	International Youth Day
23 August	International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition
8 September	International Literacy Day
9 September	International Day to Protect Education from Attack
15 September	International Day of Democracy
20 September	International Day for University Sport
21 September	International Day of Peace
28 September	International Day for the Universal Access to Information
5 October	World Teachers' Day
6 October	International Geodiversity Day^[111]
11 October	International Day of the Girl Child
13 October	International Day for Disaster Reduction
17 October	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
24 October	United Nations Day
27 October	World Day for Audiovisual Heritage
2 November	International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists^[112]
3 November	International Day for Biosphere Reserves^[113]
First Thursday of November	International day against violence and bullying at school including cyberbullying^[114]
5 November	World Day of Romani Language
5 November	World Tsunami Awareness Day
10 November	World Science Day for Peace and Development

14 November	International Day against Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property ^[115]
Third Thursday of November	World Philosophy Day
16 November	International Day for Tolerance
18 November	International International Day of Islamic Art ^[116]
25 November	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
26 November	World Olive Tree Day ^[117]
29 November	International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
1 December	World AIDS Day
2 December	World Futures Day ^[118]
3 December	International Day of Persons with Disabilities
10 December	Human Rights Day
18 December	International Migrants Day
18 December	World Arabic Language Day

Member states

As of July 2023, UNESCO has 194 member states and 12 associate members.^[119] Some members are not independent states and some members have additional National Organizing Committees from some of their dependent territories.^[120] UNESCO state parties are the United Nations member states (except Israel^[121] and Liechtenstein), as well as Cook Islands, Niue and Palestine.^{[122][123]} The United States and Israel left UNESCO on 31 December 2018,^{[124][125]} but the U.S. rejoined in 2023.^{[65][66]}



- UNESCO member states
- UNESCO member state dependent territory with separate NOC
- UNESCO associates
- UNESCO observers

Governing bodies

Director-General

As of June 2023, there have been 11 Directors-General of UNESCO since its inception – nine men and two women. The 11 Directors-General of UNESCO have come from six regions within the organization: West Europe (5), Central America (1), North America (2), West Africa (1), East Asia (1), and East Europe (1).

To date, there has been no elected Director-General from the remaining ten regions within UNESCO: Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central and North Asia, Middle East, North Africa, East Africa, Central Africa, South Africa, Australia-Oceania, and South America.

The list of the Directors-General of UNESCO since its establishment in 1946 is as follows:^[126]

Directors-General of UNESCO

Order	Image	Name	Country	Term
1st		<u>Julian Huxley</u>	 <u>United Kingdom</u>	1946–1948
2nd		<u>Jaime Torres Bodet</u>	 <u>Mexico</u>	1948–1952
–		<u>John Wilkinson Taylor</u>	 <u>United States</u>	<u>acting</u> 1952–1953
3rd		<u>Luther Evans</u>	 <u>United States</u>	1953–1958
4th		<u>Vittorino Veronese</u>	 <u>Italy</u>	1958–1961
5th		<u>René Maheu</u>	 <u>France</u>	<u>acting</u> 1961; 1961–1974
6th		<u>Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow</u>	 <u>Senegal</u>	1974–1987
7th		<u>Federico Mayor Zaragoza</u>	 <u>Spain</u>	1987–1999
8th		<u>Koichiro Matsuura</u>	 <u>Japan</u>	1999–2009
9th		<u>Irina Bokova</u>	 <u>Bulgaria</u>	2009–2017
10th		<u>Audrey Azoulay</u>	 <u>France</u>	2017– <i>Incumbent</i>





















































































































General Conference

This is the list of the sessions of the UNESCO General Conference held since 1946:^[127]

Session	Location	Year	Chaired by	from
1st	Paris	1946	Léon Blum	 France
2nd	Mexico City	1947	Manuel Gual Vidal	 Mexico
3rd	Beirut	1948	Hamid Bey Frangie	 Lebanon
1st extraordinary	Paris	1948		
4th	Paris	1949	Edward Ronald Walker	 Australia
5th	Florence	1950	Stefano Jacini	 Italy
6th	Paris	1951	Howland H. Sargeant	 United States
7th	Paris	1952	Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan	 India
2nd extraordinary	Paris	1953		
8th	Montevideo	1954	Justino Zavala Muniz	 Uruguay
9th	New Delhi	1956	Abul Kalam Azad	 India
10th	Paris	1958	Jean Berthoin	 France
11th	Paris	1960	Akale-Work Abte-Wold	 Ethiopia
12th	Paris	1962	Paulo de Berrêdo Carneiro	 Brazil
13th	Paris	1964	Norair Sisakian	 Soviet Union
14th	Paris	1966	Bedrettin Tuncel	 Turkey
15th	Paris	1968	William Eteki Mboumoua	 Cameroon
16th	Paris	1970	Atilio Dell'Oro Maini	 Argentina
17th	Paris	1972	Toru Haguiwara	 Japan
3rd extraordinary	Paris	1973		
18th	Paris	1974	Magda Jóború	 Hungary
19th	Nairobi	1976	Taaita Toweett	 Kenya
20th	Paris	1978	Napoléon LeBlanc	 Canada
21st	Belgrade	1980	Ivo Margan	 Yugoslavia
4th extraordinary	Paris	1982		
22nd	Paris	1983	Sa'ïd Tell	 Jordan
23rd	Sofia	1985	Nikolai Todorov	 Bulgaria
24th	Paris	1987	Guillermo Putzeys Alvarez	 Guatemala
25th	Paris	1989	Anwar Ibrahim	 Malaysia
26th	Paris	1991	Bethwell Allan Ogot	 Kenya
27th	Paris	1993	Ahmed Saleh Sayyad	 Yemen
28th	Paris	1995	Torben Krogh	 Denmark
29th	Paris	1997	Eduardo Portella	 Brazil
30th	Paris	1999	Jaroslava Moserová	 Czech Republic
31st	Paris	2001	Ahmad Jalali	 Iran
32nd	Paris	2003	Michael Omolewa	 Nigeria
33rd	Paris	2005	Musa Bin Jaafar Bin Hassan	 Oman
34th	Paris	2007	Georgios Anastassopoulos	 Greece
35th	Paris	2009	Davidson Hepburn	 Bahamas
36th	Paris	2011	Katalin Bogyay	 Hungary
37th ^[128]	Paris	2013	Hao Ping	 China
38th	Paris	2015	Stanley Mutumba Simataa ^[129]	 Namibia
39th	Paris	2017	Zohour Alaoui ^[130]	 Morocco
40th	Paris	2019	Ahmet Altay Cengizer ^[131]	 Turkey
41st ^[132]	Paris	2021	Santiago Irazabal Mourão	 Brazil
42nd ^[133]	Paris	2023	Simona Miculescu	 Romania

Executive Board

Biennial elections are held, with 58 elected representatives holding office for four years.

Term	Group I (9 seats)	Group II (7 seats)	Group III (10 seats)	Group IV (12 seats)	Group V(a) (13 seats)	Group V(b) (7 seats)
2017–2021	 Finland  Portugal  Turkey	 Albania  Belarus  Bulgaria	 Cuba  Grenada  Jamaica  Saint Lucia  Saint Vincent and the Grenadines  Venezuela	 Bangladesh  China  India  Indonesia  Japan  Philippines	 Burundi  Equatorial Guinea  Ethiopia  Madagascar  Zambia  Zimbabwe	 Egypt  Jordan  Morocco
2019–2023 ^[134]	 France  Germany  Italy  Netherlands  Spain  Switzerland	 Hungary  Poland  Russia  Serbia	 Argentina  Brazil  Dominican Republic  Uruguay	 Afghanistan  Kyrgyzstan  Philippines  Pakistan  South Korea  Thailand	 Benin  Congo  Guinea  Ghana  Kenya  Namibia  Senegal  Togo	 Saudi Arabia  UAE  Tunisia
2021–2025 ^[135]	 Austria  Iceland  Turkey	 Armenia  Azerbaijan  Lithuania	 Chile  Grenada  Haiti  Mexico  Paraguay  Saint Lucia	 China  Cook Islands  India  Japan  Philippines  Vietnam	 Angola  Botswana  Congo  Djibouti  South Africa  Tanzania	 Egypt  Jordan  Kuwait
2023–2027 ^[136]	 France  Germany  Italy  Spain  United Kingdom  United States	 Albania  Czech Republic  Serbia  Slovakia	 Argentina  Brazil  Cuba  Dominican Republic	 Australia  Bangladesh  Indonesia  Pakistan  South Korea  Sri Lanka	 Burkina Faso  Côte d'Ivoire  Gabon  Liberia  Mauritius  Mozambique  Nigeria	 Iraq  Oman  Qatar  Saudi Arabia

Offices and headquarters

The UNESCO headquarters is located at [Place de Fontenoy](#) in Paris, France. Several architects collaborated on the construction of the headquarters, including [Bernard Zehrfuss](#), [Marcel Breuer](#) and [Luigi Nervi](#).^[137] It includes a *Garden of Peace* which was donated by the [Government of Japan](#).^[138] This garden was designed by American-Japanese sculptor artist [Isamu Noguchi](#) in 1958 and installed by Japanese gardener [Toemon Sano](#). In 1994–1995, in memory of the 50th anniversary of UNESCO, a [meditation room](#) was built by [Tadao Ando](#).^[139]

UNESCO's field offices across the globe are categorized into four primary office types based upon their function and geographic coverage: cluster offices, national offices, regional bureaus and liaison offices.

Field offices by region

The following list of all UNESCO Field Offices is organized geographically by UNESCO Region and identifies the members states and associate members of UNESCO which are served by each office.^[140]

Africa

- [Abidjan](#) – National Office to [Côte d'Ivoire](#)
- [Abuja](#) – National Office to [Nigeria](#)
- [Accra](#) – Cluster Office for [Benin](#), [Côte d'Ivoire](#), [Ghana](#), [Liberia](#), [Nigeria](#), [Sierra Leone](#) and [Togo](#)
- [Addis Ababa](#) – Liaison Office with the [African Union](#) and with the [Economic Commission for Africa](#)
- [Bamako](#) – Cluster Office for [Burkina Faso](#), [Guinea](#), [Mali](#) and [Niger](#)
- [Brazzaville](#) – National Office to the [Republic of the Congo](#)
- [Bujumbura](#) – National Office to [Burundi](#)
- [Dakar](#) – Regional Bureau for Education in Africa and Cluster Office for [Cape Verde](#), [Gambia](#), [Guinea-Bissau](#), and [Senegal](#)
- [Dar es Salaam](#) – Cluster Office for [Comoros](#), [Madagascar](#), [Mauritius](#), [Seychelles](#) and [Tanzania](#)
- [Harare](#) – Cluster Office for [Botswana](#), [Malawi](#), [Mozambique](#), [Zambia](#) and [Zimbabwe](#)
- [Juba](#) – National Office to [South Sudan](#)
- [Kinshasa](#) – National Office to the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)
- [Libreville](#) – Cluster Office for the [Republic of the Congo](#), [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), [Equatorial Guinea](#), [Gabon](#) and [São Tomé and Príncipe](#)



The Garden of Peace at UNESCO headquarters

- [Maputo](#) – National Office to [Mozambique](#)
- [Nairobi](#) – Regional Bureau for Sciences in Africa and Cluster Office for [Burundi](#), [Djibouti](#), [Eritrea](#), [Kenya](#), [Rwanda](#), [Somalia](#), [South Sudan](#) and [Uganda](#)
- [Windhoek](#) – National Office to [Namibia](#)
- [Yaoundé](#) – Cluster Office to [Cameroon](#), [Central African Republic](#) and [Chad](#)

Arab States

- [Amman](#) – National Office to [Jordan](#)
- [Beirut](#) – Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States and Cluster Office to [Lebanon](#), [Syria](#), [Jordan](#), [Iraq](#) and [Palestine](#)
- [Cairo](#) – Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States and Cluster Office for [Egypt](#) and [Sudan](#)
- [Doha](#) – Cluster Office to [Bahrain](#), [Kuwait](#), [Oman](#), [Qatar](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [United Arab Emirates](#) and [Yemen](#)
- [Iraq](#) – National Office for [Iraq](#) (currently located in [Amman](#), [Jordan](#))
- [Khartoum](#) – National Office to [Sudan](#)
- [Manama](#) – [Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage](#)
- [Rabat](#) – Cluster Office to [Algeria](#), [Libya](#), [Mauritania](#), [Morocco](#) and [Tunisia](#)
- [Ramallah](#) – National Office to the [Palestinian Territories](#)

Asia and Pacific

- [Almaty](#) – Cluster Office to [Kazakhstan](#), [Kyrgyzstan](#), [Tajikistan](#) and [Uzbekistan](#)
- [Apia](#) – Cluster Office to [Australia](#), [Cook Islands](#), [Fiji](#), [Kiribati](#), [Marshall Islands](#), [Federated States of Micronesia](#), [Nauru](#), [New Zealand](#), [Niue](#), [Palau](#), [Papua New Guinea](#), [Samoa](#), [Solomon Islands](#), [Tonga](#), [Tuvalu](#), [Vanuatu](#) and [Tokelau](#) (Associate Member)
- [Bangkok](#) – Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific and Cluster Office to [Thailand](#), [Burma](#), [Laos](#), [Singapore](#) and [Vietnam](#)
- [Beijing](#) – Cluster Office to [North Korea](#), [Japan](#), [Mongolia](#), the [People's Republic of China](#) and [South Korea](#)
- [Dhaka](#) – National Office to [Bangladesh](#)
- [Hanoi](#) – National Office to [Vietnam](#)
- [Islamabad](#) – National Office to [Pakistan](#)
- [Jakarta](#) – Regional Bureau for Sciences in Asia and the Pacific and Cluster Office to the [Philippines](#), [Brunei](#), [Indonesia](#), [Malaysia](#), and [East Timor](#)
- [Manila](#) – National Office to the [Philippines](#)
- [Kabul](#) – National Office to [Afghanistan](#)
- [Kathmandu](#) – National Office to [Nepal](#)
- [New Delhi](#) – Cluster Office to [Bangladesh](#), [Bhutan](#), [India](#), [Maldives](#) and [Sri Lanka](#)
- [Phnom Penh](#) – National Office to [Cambodia](#)
- [Tashkent](#) – National Office to [Uzbekistan](#)
- [Tehran](#) – Cluster Office to [Afghanistan](#), [Iran](#), [Pakistan](#) and [Turkmenistan](#)

Europe and North America

- [Brussels](#) – Liaison Office to the [European Union](#) and its [subsidiary bodies](#) in [Brussels](#)
- [Geneva](#) – Liaison Office to the [United Nations](#) in [Geneva](#)
- [New York City](#) – Liaison Office to the [United Nations](#) in [New York](#)
- [Venice](#) – Regional Bureau for Sciences and Culture in [Europe](#)

Latin America and the Caribbean

- [Brasília](#) – National Office to [Brazil](#)^[142]
- [Guatemala City](#) – National Office to [Guatemala](#)
- [Havana](#) – Regional Bureau for Culture in Latin America and the [Caribbean](#) and Cluster Office to [Cuba](#), [Dominican Republic](#), [Haiti](#) and [Aruba](#)
- [Kingston](#) – Cluster Office to [Antigua and Barbuda](#), [Bahamas](#), [Barbados](#), [Belize](#), [Dominica](#), [Grenada](#), [Guyana](#), [Jamaica](#), [Saint Kitts and Nevis](#), [Saint Lucia](#), [Saint Vincent and the Grenadines](#), [Suriname](#) and [Trinidad and Tobago](#) as well as the associate member states of [British Virgin Islands](#), [Cayman Islands](#), [Curaçao](#) and [Sint Maarten](#)
- [Lima](#) – National Office to [Peru](#)
- [Mexico City](#) – National Office to [Mexico](#)
- [Montevideo](#) – Regional Bureau for Sciences in Latin America and the [Caribbean](#) and Cluster Office to [Argentina](#), [Brazil](#), [Chile](#), [Paraguay](#) and [Uruguay](#)
- [Port-au-Prince](#) – National Office to [Haiti](#)
- [Quito](#) – Cluster Office to [Bolivia](#), [Colombia](#), [Ecuador](#) and [Venezuela](#)^[143]
- [San José](#) – Cluster Office to [Costa Rica](#), [El Salvador](#), [Guatemala](#), [Honduras](#), [Mexico](#), [Nicaragua](#) and [Panama](#)
- [Santiago de Chile](#) – Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the [Caribbean](#) and National Office to [Chile](#)



[Carondelet Palace](#), Presidential Palace – with changing of the guards. The Historic Center of [Quito](#), [Ecuador](#), is one of the largest, least-altered and best-preserved historic centres in the Americas.^[141] This centre was, together with the historic centre of [Kraków](#) in [Poland](#), the first to be declared [World Heritage Site](#) by UNESCO on 18 September 1978.

Partner organisations

- [International Committee of the Red Cross \(ICRC\)](#)
- [Blue Shield International \(BSI\)](#)

- [International Council of Museums \(ICOM\)](#)
- [International Council on Monuments and Sites \(ICOMOS\)](#)
- [International Institute of Humanitarian Law \(IIHL\)](#)

Controversies

New World Information and Communication Order

UNESCO has been the centre of controversy in the past, particularly in its relationships with the United States, the United Kingdom, Singapore and the former Soviet Union. During the 1970s and 1980s, UNESCO's support for a "New World Information and Communication Order" and its MacBride report calling for democratization of the media and more egalitarian access to information was condemned in these countries as attempts to curb [freedom of the press](#). UNESCO was perceived as a platform for communists and Third World dictators to attack the West, in contrast to accusations made by the USSR in the late 1940s and early 1950s.^[144] In 1984, the United States withheld its contributions and withdrew from the organization in protest, followed by the United Kingdom in 1985.^[145] Singapore withdrew also at the end of 1985, citing rising membership fees.^[146] Following a change of government in 1997, the UK rejoined. The United States rejoined in 2003, followed by Singapore on 8 October 2007.^[147]

China

UNESCO has been criticized as being used by the People's Republic of China to present a [Chinese Communist Party](#) version of history and to dilute the contributions of [ethnic minorities in China](#) such as [Uyghurs](#) and [Tibetans](#).^{[148][149][150]}

Israel

Israel was admitted to UNESCO in 1949, one year after its creation. Israel has maintained its membership since then. In 2010, Israel designated the [Cave of the Patriarchs](#) in [Hebron](#) and [Rachel's Tomb](#) in [Bethlehem](#) – both in the [West Bank](#) – as [National Heritage Sites](#) and announced restoration work, prompting criticism from the Obama administration and protests from Palestinians.^[151] In October 2010, UNESCO's executive board voted to declare the sites as "al-Haram al-Ibrahimi/Tomb of the Patriarchs" and "Bilal bin Rabah Mosque/Rachel's Tomb" and stated that they were "an integral part of the [occupied Palestinian Territories](#)" and any unilateral Israeli action was a violation of [international law](#).^[152] UNESCO described the sites as significant to "people of the Muslim, Christian and Jewish traditions", and accused Israel of highlighting only the Jewish character of the sites.^[153] Israel in turn accused UNESCO of "detach[ing] the Nation of Israel from its heritage", and accused it of being politically motivated.^[154] The [Rabbi of the Western Wall](#) said that Rachel's tomb had not previously been declared a holy Muslim site.^[155] Israel partially suspended ties with UNESCO. Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon declared that the resolution was a "part of Palestinian escalation". [Zevulun Orlev](#), chairman of the [Knesset Education and Culture Committee](#), referred to the resolutions as an attempt to undermine the mission of UNESCO as a scientific and cultural organization that promotes cooperation throughout the world.^{[156][157]}

On 28 June 2011, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, at [Jordan's](#) insistence, censured Israel's decision to demolish and rebuild the [Mughrabi Gate Bridge](#) in Jerusalem for safety reasons. Israel stated that Jordan had signed an agreement with Israel stipulating that the existing bridge must be dismantled for safety reasons; Jordan disputed the agreement, saying that it was only signed under U.S. pressure. Israel was also unable to address the UNESCO committee over objections from [Egypt](#).^[158]

In January 2014, days before it was scheduled to open, UNESCO Director-General, [Irina Bokova](#), "indefinitely postponed" and effectively cancelled an exhibit created by the [Simon Wiesenthal Centre](#) entitled "The People, The Book, The Land: The 3,500-year relationship between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel". The event was scheduled to run from 21 January through 30 January in Paris. Bokova cancelled the event after representatives of Arab states at UNESCO argued that its display would "harm the [peace process](#)".^[159] The author of the exhibition, professor [Robert Wistrich](#) of the [Hebrew University's Vidal Sassoon International Centre for the Study of Anti-Semitism](#), called the cancellation an "appalling act", and characterized Bokova's decision as "an arbitrary act of total cynicism and, really, contempt for the Jewish people and its history". UNESCO amended the decision to cancel the exhibit within the year, and it quickly achieved popularity and was viewed as a great success.^[160]

On 1 January 2019, Israel formally left UNESCO in pursuance of the US withdrawal over the perceived continuous anti-Israel bias.^[161]

Occupied Palestine Resolution

On 13 October 2016, UNESCO passed a resolution on East Jerusalem that condemned Israel for "aggressions" by Israeli police and soldiers and "illegal measures" against the freedom of worship and Muslims' access to their holy sites, while also recognizing Israel as the occupying power. Palestinian leaders welcomed the decision.^[162] While the text acknowledged the "importance of the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls for the three monotheistic religions", it referred to the sacred hilltop compound in Jerusalem's Old City only by its Muslim name "Al-Haram al-Sharif", Arabic for Noble Sanctuary. In response, Israel denounced the UNESCO resolution for its omission of the words "Temple Mount" or "Har HaBayit", stating that it [denies Jewish ties to the key holy site](#).^{[162][163]} After receiving criticism from numerous Israeli politicians and diplomats, including [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) and [Ayelet Shaked](#), Israel froze all ties with the organization.^{[164][165]} The resolution was condemned by [Ban Ki-moon](#) and the Director-General of UNESCO, [Irina Bokova](#), who said that Judaism, Islam and Christianity have clear historical connections to Jerusalem and "to deny, conceal or erase any of the Jewish, Christian or Muslim traditions undermines the integrity of the site."^{[166][167]} "Al-Aqsa Mosque [or] Al-Haram al-Sharif" is also Temple Mount, whose Western Wall is the holiest place in Judaism."^[168] It was also rejected by the Czech Parliament which said the resolution reflects a "hateful [anti-Israel](#) sentiment",^[169] and hundreds of Italian Jews demonstrated in Rome over Italy's abstention.^[169] On 26 October, UNESCO approved a reviewed version of the resolution, which also criticized Israel for its continuous "refusal to let the body's experts access Jerusalem's holy sites to determine their conservation status".^[170] Despite containing some softening of language following Israeli protests over a previous version, Israel continued to denounce the text.^[171] The resolution refers to the site Jews and Christians refer to as the Temple Mount, or Har HaBayit in Hebrew, only by its Arab name – a significant semantic decision also adopted by UNESCO's executive board, triggering condemnation from Israel and its allies. U.S. Ambassador [Crystal Nix Hines](#) stated: "This item should have been defeated. These politicized and one-sided resolutions are damaging the credibility of UNESCO."^[172]

In October 2017, the United States and Israel announced they would withdraw from the organization, citing in-part anti-Israel bias.^{[173][174]}

Palestine

Palestinian youth magazine controversy

In February 2011, an article was published in a Palestinian youth magazine in which a teenage girl described one of her four role models as Adolf Hitler. In December 2011, UNESCO, which partly funded the magazine, condemned the material and subsequently withdrew support.^[175]

Islamic University of Gaza controversy

In 2012, UNESCO decided to establish a chair at the Islamic University of Gaza in the field of astronomy, astrophysics, and space sciences,^[176] fueling controversy and criticism. Israel bombed the school in 2008 stating that they develop and store weapons there, which Israel restated in criticizing UNESCO's move.^{[177][178]}

The head, Kamalain Shaath, defended UNESCO, stating that "the Islamic University is a purely academic university that is interested only in education and its development".^{[179][180][181]} Israeli ambassador to UNESCO Nimrod Barkan planned to submit a letter of protest with information about the university's ties to Hamas, especially angry that this was the first Palestinian university that UNESCO chose to cooperate with.^[182] The Jewish organization B'nai B'rith criticized the move as well.^[183]

Listing Nanjing Massacre documents

In 2015, Japan threatened to halt funding for UNESCO over the organization's decision to include documents relating to the 1937 Nanjing massacre in the latest listing for its "Memory of the World" program.^[184] In October 2016, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida confirmed that Japan's 2016 annual funding of ¥4.4 billion had been suspended, although he denied any direct link with the Nanjing document controversy.^[185]

US withdrawals

The United States withdrew from UNESCO in 1984, citing the "highly politicized" nature of the organisation, its ostensible "hostility toward the basic institutions of a free society, especially a free market and a free press", as well as its "unrestrained budgetary expansion", and poor management under then Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow of Senegal.^[186]

On 19 September 1989, U.S. Congressman Jim Leach stated before a congressional subcommittee:^[187]

The reasons for the withdrawal of the United States from UNESCO in 1984 are well-known; my view is that we overreacted to the calls of some who wanted to radicalize UNESCO, and the calls of others who wanted the United States to lead in emasculating the UN system. The fact is UNESCO is one of the least dangerous international institutions ever created. While some member countries within UNESCO attempted to push journalistic views antithetical to the values of the west, and engage in Israel bashing, UNESCO itself never adopted such radical postures. The U.S. opted for empty-chair diplomacy, after winning, not losing, the battles we engaged in... It was nuts to get out, and would be nuttier not to rejoin.

Leach concluded that the record showed Israel bashing, a call for a new world information order, money management, and arms control policy to be the impetus behind the withdrawal; he asserted that before departing from UNESCO, a withdrawal from the IAEA had been pushed on him.^[187] On 1 October 2003, the U.S. rejoined UNESCO.^[186]

On 12 October 2017, the United States notified UNESCO that it would again withdraw from the organization, on 31 December 2018; Israel followed suit.^[188] The Department of State cited "mounting arrears at UNESCO, the need for fundamental reform in the organization, and continuing anti-Israel bias at UNESCO".^[173]

The United States has not paid over \$600 million in dues^[189] since it stopped paying its \$80 million annual UNESCO dues when Palestine became a full member in 2011. Israel and the US were among the 14 votes against the membership out of 194 member countries.^[190] When the U.S. announced that it was rejoining the body in 2023, it also pledged to pay all past due payments.^[65]

Kurdish–Turkish conflict

On 25 May 2016, Turkish poet and human rights activist Zülfü Livaneli resigned as Turkey's only UNESCO goodwill ambassador. He highlighted the human rights situation in Turkey and the destruction of historical Sur district of Diyarbakir, the largest city in Kurdish-majority southeast Turkey, during fighting between the Turkish army and Kurdish militants as the main reasons for his resignation. Livaneli said: "To pontificate on peace while remaining silent against such violations is a contradiction of the fundamental ideals of UNESCO."^[191]

Campaigns against illicit art trading

In 2020 UNESCO stated that the size of the illicit trade in cultural property amounted to 10 billion dollars a year. A report that same year by the Rand Organisation suggested the actual market is "not likely to be larger than a few hundred million dollars each year". An expert cited by UNESCO as attributing the 10 billion figure denied it and said he had "no idea" where the figure came from. Art dealers were particularly critical of the UNESCO figure, because it amounted to 15% of the total world art market.^[192]

In November 2020 part of a UNESCO advertising campaign intended to highlight international trafficking in looted artefacts had to be withdrawn, after it falsely presented a series of museum-held artworks with known provenances as recently looted objects held in private collections. The adverts claimed that a head of Buddha in the Metropolitan Museum's collection since 1930 had been looted from Kabul Museum in 2001 and then smuggled into the US art market;

that a funerary monument from Palmyra that the MET had acquired in 1901 had been recently looted from the Palmyra Museum by Islamic State militants and then smuggled into the European antiquities market, and that an Ivory Coast mask with a provenance that indicates it was in the US by 1954 was looted during armed clashes in 2010–2011. After complaints from the MET, the adverts were withdrawn.^[193]

Products and services

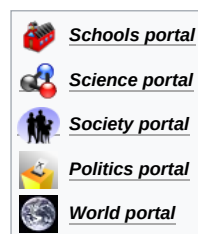
- **UNESDOC Database**^[194] – Contains over 146,000 UNESCO documents in full text published since 1945 as well as metadata from the collections of the UNESCO Library and documentation centres in field offices and institutes.

Information processing tools

UNESCO develops, maintains and disseminates, free of charge, two interrelated software packages for database management (CDS/ISIS [not to be confused with UK police software package ISIS]) and data mining/statistical analysis (IDAMS).^[195]

- **CDS/ISIS** – a generalized information storage and retrieval system. The Windows version may run on a single computer or in a local area network. The JavalISIS client/server components allow remote database management over the Internet and are available for Windows, Linux and Macintosh. Furthermore, GenISIS allows the user to produce HTML Web forms for CDS/ISIS database searching. The ISIS_DLL provides an API for developing CDS/ISIS based applications.
- **OpenIDAMS** – a software package for processing and analysing numerical data developed, maintained and disseminated by UNESCO. The original package was proprietary but UNESCO has initiated a project to provide it as open-source.^[196]
- **IDIS** – a tool for direct data exchange between CDS/ISIS and IDAMS

See also



- **Academic mobility network**
- **League of Nations archives**
- **UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists**
- *UNESCO Reclining Figure 1957–58*, sculpture by **Henry Moore**
- **UniRef**
- **National Commissions for UNESCO**
- **International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport**

Notes

- a. French: *Organisation des Nations unites pour l'éducation, la science et la culture*

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